PEREGRINE FALCON REINTRODUCTION
1990 NEST SITE REPORT

RESOURCE CONSERVATION
FUNDY NATIONAL PARK

Dwayne Simkins
Jason Rossiter
Resource Students
August 1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Study Area	3
Methodology	4
Results and Discussion	5
Nest Sites at Other Locations	7
Conclusion and Recommendations	8
Literature Cited	9

ABSTRACT

In 1990 Peregrine Falcons (anatum) were successful in fledging 3 young at the established nest site of 1989. This was the second year hacking duties were not pursued, because of the breeding pair. Observations and nest visits were used to determine this, and should continue for the breeding season of 1991.

INTRODUCTION

In 1989, a pair of Peregrine Falcons (Falco peregrinus, anatum) were successful in establishing a nest 2 km east of Alma village near Owl's Head.

In 1990, observations of the nest site at Owl's Head began on April 3rd, to determine the date of arrival of returning falcons.

There were no hacking duties scheduled for 1990 since the breeding pair was successful in fledging three chicks in 1989, and the pair was expected to be successful again. This was the second year in a row that hacking was not carried out in the Park.

Fostering was another duty that was dependant on the successfulness of the breeding pair. Once feeding was observed and the results of the first nest visit discovered three young, fostering was not pursued.

A Peregrine Falcon (anatum) survey was conducted in the Fundy coastal region by the Canadian Wildlife Service. This was done by the use of a small aircraft, so the observations could be done easily. Fundy National Park agreed to survey the coast from Martin's Head to Cape Enrage. This was done with a Zodiac, an inflatable boat, during high tide.

STUDY AREA

The nest site did not change from 1989, therefore observation of the nest site was not delayed from locating the nest.

The nest is located near Owl's Head, which is approximately 2 km east of Alma village along the coast. The nest is found under an overhang on a 150 meter high cliff and is distinguishable by large amounts of whitewash on the rocks surrounding it.

METHODOLOGY

Observations of the nest site activities were carried out by park staff and COSEP students. Bausch and Lomb binoculars and a Bushnell spotting scope were used for observations. The location of the nest was not released to the public, to provide security from excessive human disturbance and poaching. There have been no incidences of nest disturbance, therefore any further protection measures were not required.

Observations were almost daily to determine when and if the female was sitting on the nest. Once the chicks were hatched, observations were reduced to one or two visits per week. Every visit had to coincide with low tide and absence of fog.

During all visits to the nest site, approaches were within open view of the nest and there was little or no talking. The length of each visit was 1½ - 2 hours. In this time frame it allowed the observers to get an accurate record of the bird's behaviour to determine incubation, feeding, food exchanges and adult behaviour. Adult Peregrine Observation Sheets were filled out during each visit and they can be obtained through Chief Park Warden, Larry Harbidge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the adults from the breeding pair was sighted at Owl's Head on April 13th and both adults were observed on April 17th at the same location.

On approximately May 25th the female was suspected to be sitting on the nest. This is believed to have been the start of the incubation period.

On June 27th, the first observations of the adult bobbing its head, a sign of feeding young, was observed. Hatching may have occurred a few days earlier, because observations were restricted by fog. At this time visits were reduced to once or twice a week.

On July 3rd, the first nest visit was done by Warden G. Sinclair, by rappelling down the cliff to the nest. Three chicks were discovered and appeared to be approximately 7 to 10 days old. The sexes of the young are one female and two males. The chicks were too small for banding, but egg shells, pellets, prey remains and feathers were collected. The adults were present during the visit and acted very aggressively.

On July 18th another visit to the nest was done for the banding of the chicks. Three chicks still occupied the nest and were 3 weeks old. The band numbers are as follows:

	Fish and Wildlife	Black band
female	727-02861	9A
male	816-16117	9B
male	816-16118	9C

The fish and wildlife bands were placed on the left leg and the black bands were placed on the right leg. The black band is to indicate that the bird was born in the wild. A red band is used when the bird is hacked.

On July 22nd the Peregrine nest survey was conducted along the coast from Martin Head to Cape Enrage. The results of the survey showed that no new nest were found.

On August 1st two of the three young were observed outside the nest in full plumage. Five days later on August 6th, all three young were observed flying and perched on a dead tree.

On August 10th the young were observed doing such behaviour as mock combat and practicing perching in trees.

NEST SITES AT OTHER LOCATIONS

There are presently three productive nest sites in the Bay of Fundy region on the New Brunswick side for the breeding season of 1990.

Along with the nest near Fundy National Park, there is a nest on Harbour Bridge in Saint John, N.B. approximately 80 km southwest of Fundy National Park. The pair of adult falcons successfully fledged 3 chicks, but recently only 2 young have been observed.

The Canadian Wildlife Service discovered a nest on Grindstone Island near Mary's Point. The adult pair of falcons hatched three chicks. The island is located approximately 30 km east of Fundy National Park, in the Bay of Chignecto which feeds into the Bay of Fundy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reintroduction program of the Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus, anatum) to the Bay of Fundy is showing to be a successful venture.

The two established known nests at Fundy National Park and Saint John and one recently-found nest at Grindstone Island, provide hope for the continued population growth of the species in the region.

In the case with the nest at Owl's Head, three fledged chicks provide an opportunity for them to return to the Fundy National Park area. They'll be able to repopulate the cliffs that once housed the same species, before environmental contaminants slowly decreased their numbers until extinction in the region.

Future recommendations for the nest site at Owl's Head are to monitor for returning falcons, foster chicks if need be, and survey along the coastline from Martin's Head and Cape Enrage again for nests and adults.

LITERATURE CITED

Sinclair, S. and L. Harbidge, 1989, Peregrine Falcon Reintroduction 1989 Update Report, Fundy National Park.

Banasch, U., 1990, 1990 Peregrine Falcon Survey, Canadian Wildlife Service.

Moritsch, M. Q., 1983, Photographic Guide for Aging Nestling Prairie Falcons, United States Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management.